

Region 9 Regional Geographic Initiative (RGI):

2004 Requests for Proposals

Full Text Announcement

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The purpose of this Request for Initial Proposals (IPs) is to provide funding for projects which address regional strategic priorities using Regional Geographic Initiative (RGI) funds. The Regional Geographic Initiative funds unique, geographically-based projects that fill critical gaps in the Agency's ability to protect human health and the environment. These projects should address places, sectors or innovative projects, and focus on the regional strategic priorities of Community Air Toxics or Air Quality. Projects should also demonstrate state, local and/or other stakeholder participation, and identify opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding.

High Priority Areas for Consideration - Region 9 Strategic Priorities

EPA will award grants for projects in various locations and focused on at least one of Region 9's strategic priorities. Region 9's strategic priorities include: Community Air Toxics and Air Quality. These projects should focus on places, sectors, or innovative projects; demonstrate state, local, and/or other stakeholder participation; and/or identify opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. Projects should focus on human health and/or environmental protection efforts that clearly address at least one of the following Region 9 strategic priorities:

Community Air Toxics- The proposal should focus on the implementation of reduction activities that have been identified through a collaborative process and that address emissions from stationary, mobile and/or indoor sources as authorized by the Clean Air Act Section 103. The proposal should describe:

- 1) a facilitated, collaborative stakeholder process,
- 2) the assessment and priority setting of "hot spots" - geographic areas, industry sectors, and/or toxic pollutants of concern within an urban or urbanizing setting,
- 3) an array of potentially feasible mitigation activities to reduce and/or eliminate the identified toxic hot spots.

The proposal may support the development of a toxics reduction plan, however, priority will be given to proposals where the majority of federal dollars go to the implementation of mitigation activities identified in the plan (#3 above). EPA will seek to award one or two Community Air Toxics grants for a total of \$75,000.00, using Regional Geographic Initiative funds. (Additional information about EPA's community air toxics program can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/urban/urbanpg.html>).

Air Quality- EPA's Pacific Southwest Region is requesting proposals for diesel mitigation projects, including comprehensive plans to develop and implement mitigation strategies, in areas where diesel emissions adversely impact sensitive populations and/or environmental justice communities as authorized by the Clean Air Act Section 103. Because the most effective diesel controls not only reduce hazardous diesel soot emissions but also contribute to reductions in the

precursors of ozone and particulate matter, we will prioritize areas that have both high diesel emissions and serious ozone and particulate matter concentrations. We will also prioritize projects that will result in measurable emissions reductions. EPA will seek to award one or two air quality/diesel mitigation grants for a total of \$75,000.00, using Regional Geographic Initiative funds. (Additional information about EPA's Mobile Sources Air Toxics programs, including the voluntary diesel retrofit program, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/toxics.htm>).

Projects may receive funding for one or more years but generally will not receive RGI funds for more than four years. Each year of funding is competed separately. Award of funding through this year's competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

II. Award Information

In Region 9, RGI funding supports projects in geographic areas in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, including over 140 Tribal Nations, and the Pacific Islands. An estimated \$150,000 is available for award to eligible applicants through grants or agreements ranging in size from \$20,000 to \$75,000. No match is required unless required by a specific statute used to make the award. Matching funds, leveraging of funds, in-kind contributions, and other forms of leveraging strengthen proposals. From the IPs received, EPA estimates that 2 to 4 projects may be selected to submit full applications.

RGI cooperative agreements or grants are very competitive and limited funding is available. Proposed projects should therefore be of limited enough scope to benefit from an EPA investment of between \$20,000 and \$75,000. Although RGI funded projects frequently contribute to the goals of overarching, long term initiatives or plans, results for any one assistance agreement are usually achieved in a one or two year period. Although an individual project may last more than one year, RGI funds are awarded annually on a competitive basis. Assistance agreement proposals should be constructed with this in mind. Project proposals should state whether these awards will be grants or cooperative agreements. If cooperative agreements, describe the "substantial involvement" EPA expects to have.

At the time of this solicitation, EPA's 2004 budget has not been finalized. However, for reference purposes, EPA's Region 9 RGI budget for 2003 totaled \$429,500. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no awards.

III. Eligibility Information

Assistance under RGI is accessible to a wide range of applicants in geographic areas in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and the Pacific Islands. EPA is soliciting initial proposals from Tribes, public or private nonprofit institutions (including universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories), other public or private nonprofit institutions such as watershed councils which submit applications proposing projects with significant merit and relevance to EPA's mission. Proposals to renew or supplement existing projects are eligible to compete. Some of EPA's statutes may limit assistance to specific types of applicants.

Funding Restrictions and Requirements

RGI assistance agreements use various statutory authorities, depending on the nature of the project. For example, an air monitoring project would be funded under a different authority than a watershed project.

Statutory authorities that may apply to RGI assistance agreements include the Clean Air Act; the Clean Water Act; the Solid Waste Disposal Act; the Safe Drinking Water Act; and the Toxic Substances Control Act. Successful applicants shall ensure that the final application is consistent with the statutory authority pertaining to that particular grant or cooperative agreement and are asked to submit a proposal that can legally be funded by a statute.

Most RGI grants are awarded under broad authorities, and must qualify as a "survey, study, investigation, experiment, training or demonstration." Please note that:

- ▶ Incomplete proposals or proposals that do not follow the required format are NOT eligible and will be returned to the applicant without being reviewed.
- ▶ Email & fax submissions are NOT eligible.
- ▶ Routine program implementation, implementation of routine environmental protection or restoration measures, regulatory compliance or mitigation, land acquisition, recreational features such as hiking trails, purchase of vehicles, or completion of work which was to have been completed under a prior grant are NOT eligible activities.
- ▶ Proposals for research within the purview of EPA's Office of Research and Development are NOT eligible

IV. Initial Proposal Submission Information

Below is the 2004 RGI IP template. This template will guide you through the application process. **Proposals must conform with this template. Proposals NOT conforming to this template will NOT be reviewed.** You should use the "Insert" button on your computer keyboard in order to add your text directly into the template. Points will be deducted for exceeding word or page limitations. You must submit the completed Initial Proposal Form with any attachments by the application deadline. Applications not meeting this requirement will be returned and will not be considered for funding.

The following format should be used for all IPs:

2004 Initial Proposal Template:

1. **Cover Pages:** (Required.) (No More Than two (2) pages.) This includes basic information about the applicant, your budget request, the geographic area of focus, primary contact information and signature page (signature block certifies that the information provided is true and accurate, includes original signature, printed name & title, and date of signature)
2. **The Proposal:** (Required.) (Three to five pages. Maps, charts or photographs may be

included within this three to five page limit.) This should contain the following information: **Strategic Priority:** (clearly identify the Region 9 Strategic Priority that the project proposes to addresses), **Project Goal** (describe in measurable terms goal of the project, including the environmental or human health issue to be addressed, and how these will be addressed); **Project Tasks** (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals); **Project Schedule** (when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones-milestones are required for project schedules greater than one year); **Project Results** (describe how you will measure and evaluate the results of your project); and **Project Stakeholders** (list stakeholders who are impacted by the project and if/how they will be involved in the project; list others that are/may provide additional funding for the project).

3. Budget: (Required.) (No more than two (2) pages.)

Must include a detailed budget narrative and budget form (see below) explaining how you intend to use EPA funding. Be as specific as possible in describing what will be accomplished under each budget category. Budget requests must conform to the following line items that specifically describe project costs, not program items or acronyms. Program categories such as “Education,” “Restoration” or “Workshops” are too vague and do not indicate what is being paid for. These categories must be broken down into specific line items such as “Salaries,” “Supplies” or “Equipment, as shown below:

Line Item	Additional Information the Applicant Must Provide
Salaries & Benefits	List individual positions and the percentage of each individual’s annual salary to be covered. Benefits must be a separate line item.
Travel	Travel must be project related - give a brief explanation.
Equipment	Describe each item. (Tangible non-expendable personal property with a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.)
Supplies/Materials	Provide examples of types of supplies/materials for which funding is requested. Supplies should include expendable items only.
Contractual Services	Provide a description of each service being contracted with a justification for the requested level of funding.
Printing/Outreach	Provide description of project-related printing or promotional materials.
Other (please describe)	List other direct project expenses (e.g., postage, long distance phone charges, indirect costs).

Budget Form – Required – must be included with proposal following budget narrative paragraph

Budget Category	RGI Funds Requested	Matching Contributions (Including In-Kind)	Anticipated Partner Contributions (In-Kind)	Total \$\$s	What will be purchased and/or accomplished?
Salaries & Benefits					
Travel					
Equipment					
Supplies/ Materials					
Contractual Services					
Printing/ Outreach					
Other					
Totals					

We recognize that minor adjustments to the budget may need to be made on the final application for successful applicants based on work plan negotiation.

4. **Resumes and Letters of Commitment:** (Optional) (No page limits)

Two **hard copies** of each Initial Proposal must be submitted to EPA. Initial Proposals must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, February 17, 2004. Full application packages should not be submitted at this time. Costs incurred prior to any eventual grant award will not be reimbursed. Please note costs that are ineligible for funding outlined in 40 CFR Parts 30 & 31.

Please send two copies of the IPs to:

Denise Zvanovec
U.S. EPA Region 9 (PMD-4)
75 Hawthorne St.
San Francisco, CA 94105

For additional information on the RGI program, please contact Denise Zvanovec (Region 9 RGI Coordinator) at (415) 972-3701; for additional information on Air Priorities, please contact Susan McDowell at 415-947-4188. IPs **must** be received by EPA by Tuesday, February 17, 2004. *Proposals received after this date will not be reviewed.*

V. Initial Proposal Review Information

Evaluation Criteria:

EPA will award RGI Grants/Cooperative Agreements on a competitive basis/and evaluate IPs based on the following criteria:

1. **Strategic Priority:** How well the project proposes to address at least one clearly specified Region 9 Strategic Priority, as well as why this project is of critical importance to the community/applicant and/or particular geographic area. Note: no extra points will be given for projects that address more than one Strategic Priority and/or address more than one geographic area. (20 points)
2. **Project Goals and Implementation Plan:** Degree to which the project has clearly stated measurable goals, tasks and milestones that address the environmental or human health issue and achieve environmental results. Please describe how meeting the goals and objectives will address the environmental or human health issue(s) and achieve environmental results, as well as the specific tasks that will be undertaken. (25 points)
3. **Collaboration/Partnerships:** Degree to which the project proposes to work in partnership with other stakeholders and the importance of the environmental or human health issue(s) to be addressed to the community(ies) or target audience(s). Degree to which the applicant and partners are currently involved with the community(ies) or audience(s) that will be impacted or engaged. (25 points)
4. **Financial Need:** Degree of financial need of the project, and the degree to which this grant will help stimulate the availability of additional funding sources. Please describe funds/resources that have been committed, will be committed and/or have been sought for this project, in addition to this EPA RGI proposal. Please indicate if you are currently or plan to solicit funding from any other EPA source(s) for this proposal. (15 points)
5. **Readiness:** Ability of the applicant to manage this grant. Please describe the system(s) in place to hire the requisite expertise and make use of and manage these funds. Consideration will be given to the applicant's history of managing federal funds. If the applicant is, or has been a recipient of an EPA grant/cooperative agreement, please provide information regarding compliance with quarterly progress reports, reporting measures, and annual financial status reporting. (15 points)

Additional Factors:

Special emphasis will be on funding high quality projects in various different geographic locations in Region 9 and addressing the range of Region 9's Strategic Priorities. Therefore, funding decisions will be made from the group of top rated Initial Proposals based on the above criteria and considering the following additional factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds; and

2. Distribution across Region 9 Strategic Priorities.

Review Procedures:

The IPs will be evaluated by an EPA Region 9 review team consisting of staff from a cross section of EPA programs. Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to meet the stated Evaluation Criteria on a scale of 1 to 100, and the additional factors of geographic and strategic distribution as noted above. The selection process is very competitive, and not all high quality proposals will be funded.

Reviewers will be required to sign a disclosure of conflict of interest and will be removed from review of proposals where conflict of interest exists.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the selection process after all awards have been finalized.

VI. Award Administration

If your Proposal is Selected for Funding:

IPs that are selected to continue in the process will be sent an application kit for funding. These recipients will be invited to submit a detailed workplan and the completed application for funding. Receipt of an application kit is not a guarantee of funding. Deadlines must be met and the work plan must be approved by the EPA Project Officer for funding to occur.

Before money is awarded, the applicant must ensure that proper systems are in place to track and administer funds. Applicants shall demonstrate the ability to achieve the goals of the project by referencing past accomplishments, supplying resumes of project leads, etc.

Funding will be made available for project work to begin on or before September 30, 2004.

Regulations Governing the Award and Administration of RGI Grants/Cooperative Agreements:

40 CFR part 30 (for institutions of higher learning, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations) and 40 CFR part 31 and 40 CFR part 35, subparts A and B (for States, local governments, and interstate agencies).

Quarterly Reports and Financial Status Reports:

Quarterly project status reports and Financial Status reports will be required. Quarterly reports should describe project activities and provide the EPA Project Officer with information about project development. The Financial Status Report must accurately account for all federal funds expended and identify appropriate use of federal funds.

Disputes:

Should the selection be disputed, procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70 will apply.

Confidentiality:

Applicants must clearly mark information they consider confidential and EPA will make confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency Regulations at 40 CFR, Part 2, Subpart B.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and to not make any awards.

VII. Agency Contact

For additional information about the RGI program, please contact

Denise Zvanovec, (Region 9 RGI Coordinator)

Phone: (415) 972-3701,

Fax: (415) 947-3556,

Email: zvanovec.denise@epa.gov

For questions about Air priorities (Community Air Toxics or Air Quality) please contact

Susan McDowell, (Region 9 Air Division)

Phone: 415-947-4188,

Email: mcdowell.susan@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Other Funding Sources: RGI is one of many sources of funding for which your proposal may qualify. Please refer to EPA Region 9's grant website for additional grant opportunities and links to the EPA Headquarters grant information. Region 9's grants web site is located at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/funding/index.html> .

Air Toxics Website: Additional information about EPA's community air toxics program can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/urban/urbanpg.html> .

Air Quality Website: Additional information about EPA's Mobile Sources Air Toxics programs, including the voluntary diesel retrofit program, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/toxics.htm> .